

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed November 22, 2006, considered claims 1-27. Claims 1-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being unpatentable by "Slennox's eggdrop page"; April 11, 2001 (hereinafter *Slennox*) all the links are incorporated by reference.¹

By this amendment claims 1, 3, 7, 12, 21, 26 and 27 have been amended, of which claims 1, 10-12, 21, 26 and 27 are the only independent claims at issue.²

The present invention is generally directed to including a software resource as a member of the group of chat participants within the online chat session conducted through a messaging service, comprising the steps of. For example, claim 1 defines registering the software resource to indicate that it is available to participate in an online chat session, when said software resource is executed. Next, claim 1 defines including the software resource, along with the plurality of computer users, as members in a group of online chat participants, each member in the group of chat participants, including the software resource, capable of sending a plain language message to all the other members in the group of chat participants, including the software resource. Next, claim 1 defines receiving from a member of the group of chat participants a submission of a plain language message. Next, claim 1 defines transmitting the plain language message to each member of the group of online chat participants, including the software resource. Next, claim 1 defines the software resource parsing the plain language message. Next, claim 1 defines the software resource determining a plain language response to the message. Lastly, claim 1 defines the software resource transmitting the plain language response back to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the member that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally interact with the software resource as another participant in the online chat session, by responding to the plain language message.

Claims 10 and 11 are computer program product claims corresponding to performing different portions of claim 1. Claims 12 is a method claim similar from claim 1, from the

¹ Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the prior art status at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

² Support for the amendments to the claims are found throughout the specification and previously presented claims, including but not limited to paragraphs [0008], [0009], [0040], [0048] and Figures 2 & 5.

perspective of a messaging program. Claim 21 is a system claim corresponding to claim 1. Claim 26 is an apparatus claim corresponding to claim 1. Claim 27 is an apparatus claim corresponding to claim 12.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art of record does not anticipate or otherwise render the amended claims unpatentable for at least the reason that the cited art does not disclose, suggest, or enable each and every element of these claims.

Slennox describes an internet relay chat (IRC) bot known as "Eggdrop" that provides advanced IRC channel management and flexibility for adding scripts and other bots (see "What is an Eggdrop?" lines 24-29). Eggdrop bots typically sit in an IRC channel appearing like a regular user. The bots usually remain idle until called upon to perform a particular function (e.g. add or kick a user, prevent spam and maintaining the channel op-list (list of operators that have privileges to interact with and control the bot) (see "What is an Eggdrop" lines 3-6). An operator can input commands into Eggdrop via a chat interface (usually direct client-to-client (DCC)) using a "." before each command. However, regular, non-operator users are not permitted to interact with or control the bot (see "Using your Eggdrop" lines 14-17). Furthermore, when an operator is sending commands to an Eggdrop bot, other users in the same chat room do not receive replies from the bot – only the operator receives replies from the bot. Along those same lines, when an operator sends a command or inquiry to the Eggdrop bot, chat room users do not see the command/inquiry nor do they respond to it.

Accordingly, *Slennox* fails to teach or suggest including a software resource, along with the plurality of computer users, as members in a group of online chat participants, each member in the group of chat participants, including the software resource, capable of sending a plain language message to all the other members in the group of chat participants, including the software resource, as recited in claim 1. *Slennox* also fails to teach or suggest the software resource transmitting plain language response back to all of the members of the group of chat participants, including the member that submitted the plain language message and including at least one other member that did not submit the plain language message, thus enabling each member of the group of chat participants to equally interact with the software resource as another participant in the online chat session, by responding to the plain language message, as recited in claim 1. At least for either of these reasons, claim 1 patentably defines over the art of record. At least for either of these reasons, claims 10-12, 21, 26 and 27 also patentably define over the art of

record. Since each of the dependent claims depend from one of claims 1, 10-12, 21, 26 and 27, each of the dependent claims also patentably define over the art of record for at least either of the same reasons.

Although each of the dependent claims patentably define over the prior art of record for the same reasons as their corresponding base claims, many of the dependent claims also independently distinguish over the prior art of record. For example, the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest one or more of the plurality of computer users answering the plain language message sent to the software resource, as recited in claim 3. Similarly, the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest the user that submitted the message receiving multiple responses to the message including responses from the software resource and one or more of the plurality of computer users, as recited in claim 7.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the other rejections to the claims are now moot and do not, therefore, need to be addressed individually at this time. It will be appreciated, however, that this should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action regarding the cited art or the pending application, including any official notice. Instead, Applicant reserves the right to challenge any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action at any appropriate time in the future, should the need arise. Furthermore, to the extent that the Examiner has relied on any Official Notice, explicitly or implicitly, Applicant specifically requests that the Examiner provide references supporting the teachings officially noticed, as well as the required motivation or suggestion to combine the relied upon notice with the other art of record.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 22nd day of February, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Nydegger", with a stylized, cursive script.

RICK D. NYDEGGER
Registration No. 28,651
MICHAEL B. DODD
Registration No. 46,437
Attorneys for Applicant
Customer No. 047973

GRL:ds
GD0000001425V001